

HAMNET BULLETIN FOR SUNDAY 4 MAY 2003

HAMNET is the Official Emergency Communications wing of the South African Radio League and is responsible for providing emergency communication in times of distress or national disasters to local and regional authorities, when requested to do so.

COMPILED AND PREPARED BY FRANCOIS BOTHA ZS6BUU.

IN THE BULLETIN TODAY:-

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HAMNET BULLETINS AROUND THE COUNTRY

KZN Sunday morning at 07H00 on their local VHF repeaters with a relay on 7.070MHz

National Bulletin at 17H00 local on 10,130Mhz in the 30M band with a relay on 7.070Mhz

North West Province have a club bulletin on Mondays, which includes a Hamnet segment at 19H00 local on 3,750Mhz in the 80M band as well as their local repeater on 145.737.5Mhz.

Gauteng North on Tuesdays at 20:30. The frequencies are 145,725MHz and either on 7,070MHz in the 40M band or 3,695MHz in the 80M band. There is a possibility that their bulletin times may change in due course but you will be advised.

Hamnet Western Cape Province with a bulletin on Wednesdays at 20H30 local on 145:700MHz, relayed on 3,674MHz.

The HAMNET Bulletin is e-mailed to all those of whom I have address and also sent out on packet by Rudi, ZS6DX.

NOTE:- We will start the bulletin half an hour earlier from Sunday 11 May as propagation today was not all that good ON 10,130MHz.

AROUND THE WORLD EVENTS AND DISASTERS

There have been serious floods in South America, an earthquake in Southern Turkey and the SARS virus, which has had many a country on its toes, trying to contain this disease.

In Turkey, more than 150 people have lost their lives when a violent earthquake, measuring more than 6.4 on the Richter scale, rocked the town and area known as Bingöl in southern Turkey in the early hours of Wednesday morning.

It is estimated that more than 15000 will be homeless. A school dormitory accommodating more than 150 children collapsed and at least 75 children have lost their lives. Seven large buildings in Bingöl collapsed after the quake.

The loss of animal life is also enormous. Blankets and tents have been sent to the area to assist in easing the problems of cold and accommodation.

Turkey is crossed by several active fault lines including one in northern Anatolia, which caused the death of more than 20,000 people in quakes in August and November of 1999.

In Argentina, heavy rains that started in mid-April caused the overflow of the Salado River on 28 April resulting in severe flooding and a state of emergency has been declared in 35 zones in Santa Fé province. A third of the province of Santa Fé, with a population of 3 million inhabitants, has been submerged by water.

Around 150,000 inhabitants of towns close to the river are in danger and it is estimated that 50,000 people have been evacuated; the number is expected to increase to at least 80,000 (16% of the city of Santa Fé's population) by the end of April which was on Thursday.

In South Africa, on Thursday the 1st of May, we experienced our worst Bus accident, due to poor road signs and mist, when 51 people died when travelling in a bus from Kimberley to Qwa Qwa. The bus took a wrong turning and landed in the Saulspoort dam, just outside Bethlehem. Previous to that, the Westdene Bus accident in 1985 was the worst that ever happened on South African soil, where 45 school children lost their lives. I recall having been involved in that emergency from a communication point of view on that tragic afternoon.

As at Thursday 1 May, complex emergencies around the world number 24, ranging from Afghanistan to West Africa. Natural Disasters, during April alone numbered 6, starting with the Bolivian landslide which I mentioned in my previous bulletin. Crowning that, further landslides in Indonesia and Kyrgyz Stan, a cyclone in India, a further landslide in Guatemala plus the two aforementioned emergencies in Turkey and Argentina.

Again, we are so fortunate here in South Africa, not to be burdened with such immense and tragic natural or unnatural disasters.

AMATUR RADIO EMERGENCY WEBSITES

During a previous Bulletin, I mentioned that the R.S.G.B are working on a Website that will list the various international Emergency contact sites around the world.

This site is still very much in its early development stages, but it is good to know that the following Countries are already on view.

Belgium

France

Germany

Ireland

Italy

Lebanon

Norway

Russia

South Africa

Sweden

Switzerland

Turkey

Very interesting to note is that HAMNET features prominently in their line-up. This also indicates that HAMNET is a recognised emergency Network, not only in the U.K. but also around the world.

Under each Country heading, are the addresses for each individual country should who wish to gain more information about their set-up.

You may access the RSGB Website by typing in www.rsgb.org. Once in their Website, look for Emergency Communications on the left hand side of the opening page, then access their sub file for further information. A site worth watching for further developments.

AMATEUR RADIO NEWSLINE

The first comment I would like to make about this website publication is that we, as the S.A.R.L. are not the only people out there experiencing financial difficulties.

Their latest publication indicates that they are only still on air due to the staff members, out of their own pockets, paying the bills to keep the publication afloat.

Two items that caught my eye was;

A Single Frequency Operation. This is a sophisticated (or very simple) patch box that can combine or patch various frequencies used by various operators, via one patch facility that will eliminate the need to take notes or messages and to repeat them later with all its problems like mispronunciations etc. HAMNET were approached some time back by Arthur Bradshaw, director of South African

Search & Rescue, to assist and develop such a facility. Due to various problems, lack of response from certain officials and so on, not much has been done to develop this facility.

From the above newsletter, this is a major problem in the U.S.A. as well and they are also looking at constructing the same sort of facility which can be used when, say, the SANDF, with the SAPS, one or more EMS and HAMNET, need to communicate in an emergency recovery situation making use of one patch box. This will overcome the problem of all of us working on different frequencies.

I have contacted and working with a person who will assist in the development of such a "patch box". Suffice to say, here in South Africa, we also acknowledge that specific problem, and working on it.

Dayton Hamvention. The aforementioned is coming up shortly and it was interesting to note a few names of "inventors" and "developers" that came out of the Amateur Radio fraternity, who will be "saluted" at this year's convention.

Joseph Carr K4IPV. Became a silent key in November 2000 but is credited with 85 books to his name, over 700 articles covering electronics and technology and monthly columns and articles to many popular American magazines.

Al Gross W8PAL. Became a silent key in December 2000 but is credited with being the inventor of many things, we normally just take for granted. The walkie-talkie, the pager and the cordless telephone. It again just proves, out of Amateur Radio, communication developments show no end.

Bill Orr W6SAI. Became a silent key in January 2001. Will be best remembered for various publications which include "The Radio Handbook", "The Beam Antenna Handbook" and many more.

Raymond Ortgiesen for RTTY contest software he developed.

The article also mentioned the Ham astronauts who became silent keys when Columbia broke up on its re-entry from a space mission last year.

One final item in this publication. Watch your language on air. Many Hams have been brought to book, fined and lost their licenses because of abusive language on air and also swearing in a foreign language. So watch it ICASA is listening, and that's no idle threat either.

THIS AND THAT

- (1) I was a little surprised when, in my absence from the office on Wednesday, we had a call from the Department of Transport, requesting my website. This was cleared up on Friday, when a lady explained that they were looking for a brief resume of HAMNET's activities, specifically for the Search & Rescue Division.

I duly complied and sent them an e-mail on who we are and what we do and also pointed them in the direction of the SARL Website where they can obtain plenty of information.

- (2) Emergency operation training in the U.S.A., especially after 9/11, has taken on in a big way. This was gleaned from Ken Groom (ex ZR5AAD) now living in the U.S.A.

Apparently, amateur radio in particular has taken on a new meaning when it comes to emergency communication. ARES, RACES and the Red Cross, have enlisted many new names to their files and training is in full swing to equip them for any future misdemeanour. Ken has got himself involved as well and has gone through a fair amount of training to equip him adequately for any call-up.

Well done Ken and we look forward to hearing more from you.

Bulletin ends.